



STATE OF INDIANA  
INDIANA STATE EXCISE POLICE

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**For Immediate Release**

**Excise Officers Arrest Four and Cite Two East Chicago Bars**

**East Chicago, Ind. (May 5)** – Indiana State Excise Police officers, assisted by the East Chicago Police Department's Gang and Narcotics Unit, investigated two East Chicago businesses early Sunday morning that resulted in multiple administrative violations and four arrests.

Excise Officers cited Beto's Bar, located at 1301 East Chicago Street, for the administrative violation of Retail to Retail Sales when officers located alcoholic beverages that had allegedly been purchased from another retailer.

Mario's Bar, located at 4720 Indianapolis Boulevard, was cited administratively for alleged Retail to Retail Sales, two counts of Allowing a Minor to Loiter, and a violation of Indiana's Type II Gaming regulations.

Excise Officers located two minors inside Mario's Bar while conducting their investigation. When asked for identification, Vincent J. Ruiz, age 19, of Hammond, handed officers a driver's license that reportedly belonged to his father and indicated that he was 37 years old. He also informed officers that it was allegedly the same identification that he had presented to security personnel in order to enter the bar. Ruiz was issued summonses and released on the preliminary criminal charges of Minor in a Tavern, Illegal Consumption of an Alcoholic Beverage, False Statement of Age to a Permittee, and Possession of a False Identification.

John David Vargos-Moreno, age 20, of Lake Station, was also cited and released on the preliminary criminal charges of Minor in a Tavern and Illegal Consumption of an Alcoholic Beverage. Vargos-Moreno stated to officers that he allegedly presented his true identification to security personnel that were tasked with checking identifications and keeping minors out of the premise.

Indiana State Excise Police Officers also arrested and jailed the DJ at Mario's Bar, Leonard Sanders, age 47, of East Chicago and the bartender of the premise, Angel Vellon Jr., age 22, of Hammond. Sanders was jailed on the preliminary charge of Possession of Cocaine while Vellon Jr. was jailed on an outstanding Lake County warrant for probation revocation stemming from the original charges of Possession of Cocaine and Possession of Marijuana. Both subjects were transported to the Lake County Jail.

"Excise officers will continue their effort to keep communities safe through its primary responsibility of regulating alcoholic beverages" Superintendent Matt Strittmatter said. "It is essential to keep underage persons from having access to alcoholic beverages, and we will continue to investigate all other criminal activity discovered during visits to locations that have been issued an alcoholic beverage permit."

As the enforcement division of the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, the primary mission of the Indiana State Excise Police is to promote public safety by enforcing Indiana's Alcoholic Beverage Code. While excise officers have the authority to enforce any state law, they focus primarily on alcohol, tobacco and related laws.

*All criminal defendants are to be presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*